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ABSTRACT

Working with the Philadelphia-based Institute of Interactive Management, several teams at Jackson Community College (JCC), in Michigan, set out in 1994 to learn and apply an interactive design methodology to selected college subsystems. Interactive design begins with understanding problems faced by the system as a whole, which in the case of JCC included concerns related to increasingly obsolescent equipment, a lack of curriculum updates, and declining enrollment. It was recognized that the entire campus community would have to work together to solve these issues, but obstacles existed related to funding shortages and the interdependencies of increasingly complex systems. In assessing the environmental and systems conditions, four compelling issues emerged: quality and financial conditions, uncertainty about the future, empowerment and information dissemination, and trust and confidence. The next step in the interactive design process was to assume that the original system was completely demolished and design a new system from scratch. The first set of goals developed at JCC included employee participation, continued operation within the principles of continuous quality improvement, an emphasis on creating capacity rather than downsizing, and the initiation of a campus-wide visioning process. As a result of this process, JCC has been able to create a community of learners for students, faculty, departments, administration, and the community. In addition, the college community has been learning about learning itself and has recognized that learning, and institutional transformation, never end. (HAA)

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Emerging Models of the New Paradigm

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Emerging Models of the New Paradigm

Jackson Community College
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A Case of the Boiling Frog

Most community college presidents have probably experienced the "Boiling Frog Syndrome," even if the old story has not reached their ears. As Clyde E. LeTarte, former President at Jackson Community College, relates the story, a frog dropped in a pot of boiling water will immediately jump out, saving its own life. However, a frog placed in a pot of cool water brought to a boil slowly, will joyfully paddle around until its demise. These days a lot of college presidents are "in the pot" and the water is hot...or at least it's heating up pretty rapidly. A reasonable person might ask what a boiling frog or a boiling President has to do with a "learning college," but that, as Paul Harvey would say, "is the rest of the story."

Unintended Consequence of an Exercise in Design. Jackson Community College personnel did not deliberately set out to design a "learning college." In many ways, it already was one. The college had a long record of service dating back to 1928, when the first class of students enrolled. When the transformation began at JCC, the intent was to expand "Continuous Quality Improvement" efforts undertaken in 1990. However, a learning experience intended as a staff development exercise in systems design turned into a transformation process with huge waves and tiny ripples that touched everyone on campus. It is a process that reaches into the community, and holds promise for providing new services and generating new revenues, nationally and internationally.

Even before the transformation to a learning college began, politics was changing the lives of the Jackson Community College family in a big way. After 12 years of outstanding service to the college and the community, President Clyde LeTarte chose to run for Michigan's House of Representatives. Elected in a tough battle in 1993, LeTarte resigned his position at JCC. The Board of Trustees named Lee Howser to the Presidency later that same year. Not many days passed before he began to understand Clyde's story of the boiling frog.

The new President's first order of business was to confirm with the Administrative Cabinet that they were still committed to the continuous improvement philosophy. The answer was affirmative and unanimous. Cabinet members recognized that the practice of Continuous Quality Improvement had significantly improved numerous individual operations, as well as several larger systems of the college. Staff members had developed a great deal of expertise in systems thinking using an analytical approach: taking a system apart; understanding the behavior of the parts; making corrections; and putting the system back together with the expectation that it

would operate better than before. In general, the old saw "if it ain't broke don't fix it" sounded just right, and there was a commitment to staying the course. The water temperature went up just slightly.

Concerns Despite a Rich Tradition. Jackson Community College deserved its fine reputation as an institution offering quality instruction, responding to community needs, operating efficiently and playing a leadership role in the continuous improvement movement at the national level. The community consistently rated the college as a major asset, providing a home for the cultural arts, and faculty and staff who were community leaders in every walk of life. Most people were enjoying the "warm" water, comfortable in thinking there was little to worry about.

The President began to worry anyway. After 24 years of service to the college, the last 12 as Vice President for Administration and Business, the new President's first analytical look at the total institution was a new and sobering experience.

Realities constantly surfaced that forced him to look to concerns about the future, rather than the successes of the past.

The situation heated up further when a staff development program was initiated to help design new systems where none previously existed. Given the staff's experience and knowledge in improving small and large system operations, this new learning experience held great promise.

Working with Jamshid Gharajedaghi, President and CEO of INTERACT, The Institute for Interactive Management in Philadelphia, PA, several small teams set out to learn and apply an Interactive Design methodology to the design of selected college subsystems. Participants learned that synthetic thinking (vs. analytic thinking) begins with understanding the larger system of which the system to be designed is a part. In this case, the larger system was the whole college. Consequently, the teams set out to design the whole college, both as a practice exercise and as a way to understand the context for designing subsystems and their interactions. The water temperature was really heating up.

A Look at the Future Contained in the Present. Interactive Design begins with "Formulation of the Mess," or an understanding of the set of interacting problems faced by the system. Those problems are usually the unintended consequences of past successes carried to their extreme. The "mess" serves as an early warning system, by exaggerating the system's vulnerability if it does not change with the changing environment. The story of JCC's mess showed that:

- Faculty and staff were mature and very concerned about the future with a new president and uncertainty of funding.
- Equipment was aging, much of it 30 years old. Even the newer computers were now facing obsolescence.
- Fewer and fewer curriculum updates were being made.
- There was a perception that the college was becoming more traditional than it was in the 60's and 70's, when growth was dramatic and new, exciting projects were common.

- Enrollment was dropping on campus, although increasing a bit at extension centers. Competition was everywhere.
- The district had lost hundreds of base manufacturing jobs over the last few years, and the perception was that any growth would be in lower paid service industry jobs.
- There was a perception that the employee collective bargaining agreements were restrictive and not conducive to flexibility and change.
- College employees expressed frustration at a lack of a shared vision, disconnected systems, fragmented sources of information, and a lack of understanding about where decisions were made and the criteria on which decisions were based.

As these concerns were surfaced, others could begin to feel the hot water. It became more and more obvious that the best individual efforts of the Board of Trustees, and the faculty, support staff and administration could not change these conditions. It had to be done together and a new way to do it was needed. But two huge obstacles were in the way.

First, funding was a real and worsening problem. With State appropriations and local property taxes expected to increase at inflation rates only (JCC lost 12 tax elections in a row), and huge tuition increases no longer a viable option, over 93% of revenues were stagnant. Finding new revenues was imperative. Second, while continuous improvement had improved the efficiency and effectiveness of *independent* systems, it was obvious that the system had reached a point at which it was necessary to deal with the *interdependencies* of increasingly complex systems.

The Commitment to Design. During a College Design Team Meeting on March 16, 1994, Carole Schwinn, then Assistant to the President for Special Projects, leaned over and asked the President, "Wouldn't it be great if we could design the college for real, rather than as an exercise?" With that question, the flood gates opened and the boiling water rushed in. Designing a new college became the order of the day, and even the most insensitive frog could no longer paddle around oblivious to the magnitude of change about to occur at JCC! After a few weeks of thinking about the possibility of completely redesigning the college, gaining commitments from Cabinet, and forming a new, seven-member college Design Team, it became apparent that need and opportunity had arrived simultaneously at Jackson Community College.

Designing the "Learning" College

One of Jamshid Gharajedaghi's pearls of wisdom is, "The world is not won by those who are right. It is won by those who can convince others they are right." Thus, an obvious task for the President and the new Design Team was to convince the Board of Trustees and approximately 650 full and part-time employees of the college that the decision to completely design a new college, rather than "fix" the one that was known and loved, was the right decision. In assessing the environmental and system conditions that needed to be addressed, four compelling issues emerged:

- quality and financial conditions
- fear and uncertainty about the future
- empowerment and information dissemination
- trust and confidence

From these issues, three major design goals and a commitment became the central thrust of the "world" message. The major goals became creating a college that:

- is capable of self-renewal
- generates new capacity for revenue generation
- presents an opportunity for all stakeholders to provide input into organization and operation

A significant commitment was made to build capacity through redesign rather than to reduce cost by downsizing, an approach taken by many organizations undergoing major change. Employees would be maintained whenever possible, moving them to positions where their skills could contribute to success. Within constraints of personnel and money, increased flexibility and new opportunity in roles and job responsibilities would be created.

Blowing It Up and Starting All Over. Once "Mess Formulation" is completed and the story is told about the need to redesign, Interactive Design calls for assuming that the system "blew up last night," and that only the environment remains intact. Designers, however, can remember what they loved about the system and keep the best practices and systems. The rest of the system is designed from a clean sheet of paper, leaving the "Mess" behind. JCC's Design Team worked on the whole college design for several months, gathering information from the environment and from staff, students and community members. Then in an all-college meeting on Tuesday, September 6, 1994, at around 9:30 a.m., the President announced that "the college had been blown up last night." He shared with those in attendance the first iteration of the new college Architecture (Figure 1), along with the values and goals underlying the design.

The President's address made the following commitments:

- All employees would have a chance to participate and contribute to further iterations of the design.
- The college would continue to operate within the principles of continuous improvement and quality of program and service.
- The college would work toward creating capacity rather than automatically down-sizing. People would be the top priority.
- A campus-wide visioning process would occur to inform and guide decisions, actions and relationships.

Finally, faculty was charged with designing the *Core Knowledge* Component from a clean sheet of paper. The term 'Core Knowledge' was used to recognize faculty's responsibility for learning, the essence of the college. The charge was to organize to assure the integrity of the academic program's content and methodology, and to assume responsibility for professional development and faculty evaluation. The President's address

concluded with these words, "For 25 years, I have heard you say to the JCC administration, 'Give us leadership, but don't tell us what to do.' Here is your chance to design your world and realize your dreams."

Design of Platforms, Components and their Interactions. As promised, opportunities were provided for all faculty and staff to comment on, suggest changes, complain about, and otherwise discuss the first iteration of the JCC Architecture. Members of the seven-person Design Team spent time in staff and departmental meetings explaining and listening. The major communication role was played by Bonnie John-Murray, Vice President for Institutional Services. Based on feedback, further iterations of the college Architecture were completed. Simultaneously, the new Center for Design and Continuous Improvement was designing its own Component, and preparing to help others learn and apply the Interactive Design methodology.

Once the Architecture was finalized, System Managers were named for the major Components, and new Component Design Teams set out to design all Platforms, Components and their interactions:

Traditional Platform - Includes Transfer programs, Occupational Education/ Workforce Development (OEWD) programs, and Cultural Enrichment programs.. Programs are subsidized and headed by Deans. Transfer co-Deans are on three-year assignments from faculty, while OEWD's Dean and Associate Dean are administrators. Cultural Enrichment is directed by an administrative System Manager.

Technology Platform - Consists of two Components. The Information Technology Component provides computing and communication services inside the college and sells services externally. The Center for Design and Continuous Improvement also provides services internally and sells consulting services nationwide. Both Components are directed by System Managers.

Market Platform - Generates programs that are entrepreneurial and self-supporting. Each program is directed by a System Manager.

Core Knowledge - Home of the faculty regardless of the Platform or Component from which they deliver services. Headed by the Dean of Faculty on three-year assignment from faculty.

Shared Services - Contains services that are used by all Components. Shared Services are subsidized, and the Component's primary services are directed by System Managers.

Marketing - The window to the environment, interpreting JCC to stakeholders and, in turn, communicating stakeholders' needs and desires to the college community. Marketing is subsidized and directed by a System Director.

Planning/Monitoring - The Executive function is located here, with the overall responsibility of managing the interaction of the Components rather than managing the Components themselves.

College Planning Board - Includes System Managers of all major college Components, and college support staff. Responsible for integrating the designs and plans of all Components. Provides information and

recommendations to the Board of Trustees, as well as a shared decision-making role with the Executive unit. Presidents of the Faculty and Support Staff Bargaining Units are Ex-Officio members.

Component Planning Boards - All Components have Planning Boards, made up of Component personnel and other institutional representatives with interest or stake in operations of the Component. Responsible for planning and monitoring for the Component.

Visioning a Community of Learners. As promised, a one and one-half day, large-scale visioning event designed by a team of employees, was held in February 1995. Three draft "vision" statements were developed by the nearly 250 student and employee participants, and a series of Project Task Force Teams were appointed to work toward resolution of several major issues identified. Over the next months, several iterations of the Vision Statement were completed under the direction of faculty member Mark Harris. On October 24, 1995, the College Planning Board adopted the new college vision:

> *A Community of Learners:* Jackson Community College is committed to the intellectual, physical, emotional, and cultural development of students, ourselves, and our community. We are dedicated to academic excellence, open communication, respect for differing viewpoints, mutual trust, and lifelong self-improvement.

The process of participative design is not an easy one. It prompts all the difficulties and anxieties that one might expect from a change of this magnitude. But the involvement and empowerment has marvelous payoffs when faculty and staff have the information on which to base decisions and the freedom to create their own future.

Realizing the Vision of a Community of Learners

Terry O'Banion references the Wingspread Group on Higher Education's publication, *An American Imperative,* in which they spell out the implications of visioning a college as a "Community of Learners." "Putting learning at the heart of the academic enterprise," the group suggests, "will mean overhauling the conceptual, procedural, curricular, and other architecture of post secondary education on most campuses." Overhauling JCC and realizing its vision has dramatic implications for students, faculty, cross-functional teams, the new governing Planning Boards, the Board of Trustees, and the community of Jackson and beyond.

A Community of Learners for Students. Currently students at JCC would recognize the opportunity to join a "learning community" in which they could enroll in "linked" courses taught by teams of faculty members. In the future, they can expect to encounter learning communities well in advance of entering JCC as students. In fact, their first point of contact with the college might well be with members of one of many learning communities of JCC students organized around student interests and aspirations. Those communities, with the guidance of faculty "guides" or "mentors," will be responsible for determining their own learning goals, for actively participating in the design of their own learning experiences, for

sustaining the community, and for recruiting and supporting new members. Members of communities will be engaged in research, in peer learning experiences, and in service learning in the community. Learning communities will document their learning plans and projects for the use of future members. It is anticipated that some learning communities will actually produce products and services to be distributed in the community and beyond. Students pursuing careers in education or human development, for instance, might produce thematic learning modules for use in the public schools.

The Core Knowledge design document attests to the desired future expectations for students.

> We assert that all students will be self-determined, self-directed, responsible, technologically literate, and willing to suspend their disbelief as they enter the academic environment. Students will, as a result of their contact with our faculty, develop lifelong learning strategies and problem-solving skills which extend beyond the classroom. All of these skills are vital for their success and for ours.

A Community of Learners for Faculty. When faculty were charged with the responsibility of designing the Core Knowledge component, they were asked to articulate a theory of learning and to provide for the continuous development and evaluation of their members. The learning theory espoused in the design document is worth quoting at length.

> In the future, teachers will no longer ask the question, "what is the best way to teach, say, mathematics, or English?" But in order to get to that point, we will need to develop new metaphors and new learning theories. Behaviorism and cognitive learning theories have been our guides for the last half century. We accepted the 'classroom-as-workplace' metaphor and the 'cult of efficiency' that had moved from business to industry into schools early in this century (Johnston and Brooks, 1979). In this old world, lecture and the transmission model (or "Banking Model," if you prefer Paulo Freire's terminology) controlled what happened in the classroom.

The document goes on to say that "social constructionist theories seem to offer the next step forward."

> Social constructionists see education as reacculturative; that is, switching membership from one community or culture to another. Viewed this way, classrooms and the role of teachers take on a different look. Teachers must allow students to try on various roles previously reserved for the teacher ---teacher, expert, leader, scholar---as they socially construct and justify knowledge. Students in this environment will no longer be expected to simply "know," but instead will be expected to "understand." Teachers will act as facilitators, guides, coaches, and full members of the discourse community or culture that the

student is attempting to enter, but they will no longer be the "sage on the stage." The classroom as factory metaphor will be replaced by the classroom as a community of scholars metaphor.

In designing a development model for themselves, the faculty are experimenting with a three-phase process in which faculty:

1. Develop an annual development plan by identifying goals, activities and accomplishments in teaching, professional development, and service to the institution and the community
2. Demonstrate teaching effectiveness, professional growth, service, and student learning (annual formative evaluation)
3. Organize portfolios representing their work, their accomplishments, and the learning of their students (summative evaluation, every sixth year)

This development model assists the faculty member in targeting areas for improvement, and utilizes professional development as the "mechanism by which the targeted areas are changed for the better."

A Community of Learners for Departments. Putting learning "at the heart of the academic enterprise" is also evidenced in the design of a completely new curriculum in JCC's Nursing Department. The design team, made up of the entire nursing faculty, began their design with an understanding of the larger whole of which their curriculum is a part. They studied emerging trends in health care and the implications of government changes and funding models. They researched trends in the nursing profession, in the health concerns and status of the community, and the changes occurring in the traditional clinical settings.

The design team studied emerging learning theories, and developed their own conception of learning (see Figure 2) to guide their design. They also researched nursing theories and adopted a self-care model and conceptual framework for its fit with their own mental models and their understanding of how industry and community needs are evolving. Significantly, they sought to understand the new JCC architecture, the role of the nursing program in it, and how the program would interact with other Components of the architecture. They met with other faculty to discuss the implications of change for other departments, and how collaborative, win/win solutions to conflict might be achieved.

Because they were seeking NLN accreditation for the first time, they studied that agency's requirements and made contacts with "state of the art" accredited programs. The depth of learning and commitment from their synthetic/design approach, resulted in newly designed ADN and LPN Nursing curricula that have received overwhelmingly positive early reviews.

A Community of Learners for Cross-Functional Teams. Learning in cross-functional teams can be illustrated by a simple story that had a profound effect on those who heard it and acted on it. Early in the college's experience with Continuous Quality Improvement, JCC's former President and several deans and directors were participating in a Quality in Daily Work workshop. In the workshop they were learning and applying a seven-step process for

documenting and standardizing routine work processes. The team's application was the process for cancelling low enrollment courses, and its members were diligently constructing a flow chart. In the midst of enormous frustration about their ability to reach consensus on how the process really worked, and how they could possibly make sure the process resulted in enrolled students ability to make alternate choices, the group started asking themselves a different set of questions. They began to ask, "Why do we cancel low enrollment courses?, "and began to answer, " ...because we don't know what courses our students need and want to take, or in which time slots or locations they prefer to take them."

The team realized that they were attempting to document and standardize a process that was essentially a rework process; a result of an inability to schedule based on knowledge of student needs and expectations. Their *operational learning* of working on a routine process gave way to a level of *conceptual learning* or reframing of the problem, that has opened up new possibilities in the way learning experiences are scheduled at JCC.

A Community of Learners for Planning Boards. The new Architecture and its new Planning Board structures have created new communities of employees who have never worked together before. The College Planning Board, for example, is made up of System Managers from all major Components, representing a cross-section of the entire campus. Members are struggling to learn and develop new habits and patterns of interacting that replace old adversarial relationships with cooperation and shared responsiblity for the whole. Most members slip less and less frequently into the old "default" methods of acting and interacting, as the new design becomes a reality.

A Community of Learners for the Board of Trustees. The Board of Trustees adopted a Policy Governance Structure in November 1994. The premise of the model, as developed by John Carver, is that the Board acts as purchasing agent for the community by prescribing "Ends," relating primarily to what programs will be offered for which people, at what price. The Board sets certain limitations on the President and then accepts any action, within the limitations, to achieve the Ends. Thus, the Board reserves the prerogative of goal setting and monitoring while leaving design, implementation, and assessment to the professional staff.

The first Ends Statement considered by the Board was Associate Degree Outcomes; designating the skills, knowledges, and abilities that Associate Degree recipients are expected to demonstrate. Four monthly meetings of the Board were devoted to testimony and dialogue with employers from the community, current and former students, and college faculty, administrators and support staff. On the strength of that exchange, the Board's paradigm of instruction shifted to Learning and Teaching from Teaching and Learning. That shift makes all the difference in thinking about the process.

A second Ends Statement adopted by the Board designates institutional values, providing a basis for personal and professional conduct, and a foundation for considering new programs and services.

A Community of Learners for Jackson County and Beyond. The Core Knowledge design document suggests that "it is not only for their individual good that students must achieve."

> We must create an environment in which students succeed and in which they develop, along with a healthy self-interest, an understanding of the sociological and cultural necessities for preserving the community.

If the promise of the Jackson Comm*U*nity Transformation Project, recently funded by the W.K. Kellogg Foundation, bears fruit, that understanding will become a reality. The purpose of the project, which is a partnership with the Jackson Area Quality Initiative, is to create a community in which citizens develop the competence to increase their desire and ability to meet their own needs, the needs of others, and the needs of the larger society. Over a four-year period, the Interactive Design approach will be used to engage citizens in the design of the community's desired future, realization of the design, and sustaining an ongoing process of design and continuous improvement in the community.

The Project has already provided opportunities for JCC faculty, staff and students to engage in their own development and the development of the whole community. Many attended the initiating event of the project, a teleconference called "From TQM to a Learning Community." Broadcast to over 130 sites around the world, the teleconference featured a dialogue among Peter Senge, author of The Fifth Discipline, Margaret Wheatly, author of Leadership and the New Science, and Thomas Berry, co-author of The Universe Story. The dialogue, facilitated by Clare Crawford-Mason and Lloyd Dobyns, introduced attendees to the concepts of systems thinking, the transformation of large-scale, complex adaptive systems and chaos theory. A day of community visioning following the teleconference was an opportunity for many JCC employees to interact with community members from all ways of life.

Several nationally recognized consultants to the JCTP have engaged faculty and staff in conversations related to a "Community of Learners," including Dr. Ira Shor, author of Empowering Education and Peter Block, author of the Empowered Manager and Stewardship, as well as Jamshid Gharajedaghi.

Learning About Learning

Perhaps the most exciting adventure in JCC's transformation process is the ongoing engagement of the college community in learning about learning itself. When one of the authors (Schwinn) was an adult student at JCC in the early 1970's, she used to walk by the Board Room where Cabinet meetings were taking place, and imagine the intellectual exhileration of the kinds of conversations that must be going on at that level in an institution of higher education. Once she was employed at the college, she could hardly wait to become part of those conversations. It is only now, eighteen years later, that the conversations all around JCC have the

intellectual exhilaration she once imagined. While the conversations will continue and the meaning of a "Community of Learners" will evolve over time, several distinctions in JCC's current theory and definition can be made.

Distinctions among data, information, knowledge, understanding and wisdom. When these distinctions were made explicit in early Design Team work with Jamshid Gharajedaghi, it marked the beginning of reconceptualizing JCC's future. Dr. Russell L. Ackoff and Gharajedaghi make the following distinctions.

Data are symbols that represent the properties of objects and events.

Information is contained in descriptions, answers to questions that begin with such words as who, what, when, where, and how many. *Knowledge* is conveyed by instructions, answers to the how-to questions. *Understanding* is conveyed by explanations, answers to why questions. *Wisdom* deals with values. It involves the exercise of judgment through dialogue.

During design conversations, the team began to recognize that community colleges have historically been in the business of dispensing data and information, packaged as degrees. Some have even been good at generating and disseminating knowledge and understanding. The team realized that with advances in technology, the introduction of distance learning, the opportunity to earn a degree via the Internet, and competition from PBS and others in packaging data and information, JCC needed to completely reconceptualize how it adds value for learners. Ackoff has suggested that,

Although we are able to develop computerized information-, knowledge-, and understanding-generating systems, we will never be able to generate wisdom by such systems. It may well be that wisdom -which is essential for the pursuit of ideals or ultimately values ends - is the characteristic that differentiates man from machines. For this reason, if no other, the educational process should allocate as much time to the development and exercise of wisdom as it does to the development and exercise of intelligence.

The challenge of reconceptualizing how JCC can even begin to develop and exercise wisdom remains a most significant challenge, but the conversations about learning and how JCC adds value are occurring everywhere on campus nearly every day.

Distinction between Operational learning and conceptual learning. This distinction, made by Daniel Kim, parallels Chris Argyris' distinction between single-loop and double-loop learning. Kim writes,

> *Operational learning* represents learning at the procedural level, where one learns the steps in order to complete a particular task. This *know-how* is captured as routines, such as filling out entry forms, operating a piece of machinery, handling a switchboard, and retooling a machine.

At JCC, examples of new operational learning abound. The routine approach to standardizing existing systems and the early, standard approach

to Strategic Quality Planning represent learning at the procedural level. By contrast, Kim defines conceptual learning.

> *Conceptual learning* has to do with thinking about *why* things are done in the first place, sometimes challenging the very nature or existence of prevailing conditions, procedures, or conceptions and leading to new frameworks in the mental model. The new frameworks, in turn, can open up opportunities for discontinuous steps of improvement by reframing a problem in radically different ways.

Examples of new conceptual learning are much more recent and primarily involve learning through the design of the new JCC. In fact, engaging in the Interactive Design metholodology challenged and transformed most every concept, and every structure, function, output and process in the institution.

Distinction between analytic and synthetic approaches to learning. JCC's applications of continuous quality improvement, including Breakthrough projects, Quality-in-Daily-Work (QIDW) activities and Strategic Quality Planning were based on the Plan - Do - Study - Act Cycle (the Deming Cycle or Shewhart Cycle for Learning), an analytic approach to learning described earlier. As the college became involved in Interactive Design principles and methodology, it quickly became apparent that this was a synthetic, or systems, approach to learning (Figure 4).

Distinction between social (group, organization or community) and individual learning. Social learning is not simply a matter of adding up all the learning of individuals. While individual learning is a change in the individual's know-how (routines or habits) and know-why (beliefs, assumptions, mental models), social learning is the change in collective routines or mental models of groups, organizations or communities. *Social* learning, then, is cultural transformation: a change in the beliefs, assumptions and mental models of a group of purposeful individuals in a purposeful group, organization or community. A group, organization or community builds it capability for social learning when its members collectively and systematically:

a. Come to a common understanding of their history, their current condition, the set of interacting problems they face, and the environmental events and trends impacting their future
b. Surface, examine and make explicit their shared beliefs, assumptions and mental models regarding their stakeholders needs and expectations; and the conceptual frameworks for organizing themselves
c. Design the system's structure, functions/outputs and processes for learning and adaptation in changing conditions
d. Establish shared expectations for the system's performance and methods for monitoring
e. Identify gaps between expected and actual performance of the system

f. Examine and improve the information system, decision-making systems and implementation capabilities (lst order learning or improving know-how)

g. Periodically reexamine fundamental beliefs, assumptions and mental models and redesign the system (2nd order learning or improving know-why)

Over 150 JCC faculty and staff attended a recent workshop called "A Community of Learners: Learning About Change," offered by Bert Peachy of Richland College. Participants engaged in conversations about the college's history, culture and traditions, the meaning of community, and what it might mean to realize a vision of a "Community of Learners." The process deepened the dialogue, and helped participants to relate change and organization learning theory to their own experiences.

Learning Never Ends

In "The Rules for Being Human" of Chicken Soup for the Soul, an anonymous author writes, "learning lessons does not end. There is no part of life that does not contain its lessons. If you are alive, there are lessons to be learned."

Many lessons have been learned in JCC's design process and many more remain to be learned. But by far the most important is that fundamental change in an institution of higher education is like no other. Some corporations may have a cultural history of 30 to 50 years, most far fewer. And although there may be larger numbers of employees in business and industry, few will have had the freedoms that faculty and some educators have enjoyed since the early days of Greek history. Some cultural practices in higher education were established in the Middle Ages. Such deeply rooted traditions are resistant to change and may be far less amenable to cook book approaches than those of business and industry. Some guiding principles and philosophies may be far more useful for the reader's consideration.

1. ***Keep the focus.*** The sharper the focus of the effort, the more successful it will be. Asking such questions as, "Is it good for the students?" and "Will it contribute to learning?" is very helpful in maintaining focus. A set of principles and underlying assumptions provide a touchstone for guidance.
2. ***Expect conflict, unhappiness and pain.*** Human beings like and seek stability. When stability is upset, they try to return to the original state or as close to the original state as possible. Leadership and the New Science author, Margaret J. Wheatley was helpful in understanding the nature of chaos in understanding organizations.
3. ***Be open to honest criticism.*** The CEO, in particular, must see that the environment is one which permits, not actively promotes, change. People must be free to speak their minds and to be heard. Punitive action against opposition will doom any effort.
4. ***Involve everyone.*** Involvement of all the primary stakeholder groups (students, faculty, Board of Trustees, support staff,

administrators, and community residents) is extremely important. Not all have to be involved at the same time or at every step, but there is a time and place for everyone.

5. ***Promote constant communication.*** Provision of a communication process and a forum for discussion, is important. While many people will choose to participate, it is essential to continue to reach out with the invitation and the opportunity. Modification of the form and flexibility in specific details of communication methods are mandatory.

6. ***Double your time estimates.*** Making cultural changes in an organization takes an extraordinary amount of time. Whatever the original timeline, double it! While there are many "Nike's" or changes of the "Just do it!" variety, fundamental change requires conflict resolution and substitution of old behaviors. The process just takes time.

7. ***Provide coping strategies.*** Many people experience profound change as a grieving process. The old ways are going or gone and the new ways have not yet emerged. Expect denial, resistance, and the other human reactions to loss. Providing coping strategies will help people move through the grieving stages more smoothly and rapidly.

8. ***Provide for "new" learning.*** Expecting new behavior from people without "new learning" is not realistic. People must have new information with which to challenge old assumptions and expectations. Given a successful challenge to the old assumptions and expectations, the decision rules can be changed and followed by new implementation methods and strategies.

9. ***Use specialized language sparingly.*** Language specific to the effort may create a problem as people try to understand what is happening and learn the new language at the same time. Even the President found words in the Interactive Design process that caused him much concern. The specificity of the terms' meaning, however, required his acquiescence.

10. ***People will react differently.*** Many people within the organization will rise to the challenges and expectations that are placed before them. Others will be uncomfortable and will leave. Others will resist change and hope to survive this latest fad.

12. ***Control rumors.*** Rumor control is as important as anything that will be planned. It is important that people get frequent, accurate information and that there is a trustworthy clearinghouse.

The Promise of the Future

Another "Rule for Being Human" reads, "A lesson is repeated until learned. A lesson is presented to you in various forms until you have learned it. When you have learned it, you can go on to the next lesson." One can only imagine what the future will hold, but here are a few fairly safe assumptions about the promise of the future.

Learning to Live in Change. The college community will continue to learn how to live in change, maybe even to welcome it with open arms. Thus far, the process has been exciting for some, frustrating for many, and deeply painful for a few.

Learning to Realize the Vision. The college community will continue to work on realizing the vision of becoming a "Community of Learners." For a vision to manifest itself in real change, it has to be more than a statement and more than an event.

Learning to Transform the Culture. Ask Peter Senge what fish talk about and he will tell you that he's not sure, but he does know they don't talk about water. Fish are so close to water, just as we are to our culture, that they, and we, don't give it a second thought. Yet, our beliefs, moral code, values, and patterns of behavior are part of our culture and how we interact with our environment. This is true of the individual as well as organizations.

The task of changing organizational culture is a huge one. Certainly, adoption of a student/employee vision statement to support the Board adopted Mission Statement and Values is important. So are the Policy Governance Model at the Board level, and the participative model of the College Planning Board. From a President's point of view, however, the most important cultural change has been the willingness and readiness of faculty and staff to accept responsibility for their own behavior and future as they assume authority and control over their own actions.

There is ample evidence that change is occurring. The faculty has printed nineteen iterations of their Core Knowledge design in 16 months. Each iteration is a learning experience and improves on the next one. The Student Development Component's Design Team is designing methods of assuring that each student has a personal plan for success, and that progress is assessed just as it is in the classroom. The Occupational Education and Workforce Development Component is exploring a learning model that provides for individual as well as enterprise and community development. They are designing processes for establishing excellence guidelines, for self-assessment of learning needs, and for design of learning experiences at all stages of individual, enterprise and community development. These are but a few examples of how thinking within the college is changing. The lapsed time is much too short to properly assess the extent of cultural transformation, but change agents, early adapters in the college, and other observers indicate that they are beginning to see differences that promise a real difference in the future.

Taking a Different Road

Shortly after the all-college presentation in September 1994, a senior faculty member advised the President that the success of the new Architecture would depend on concrete results, and the sooner something changed, the better. His concern was in the minds of a lot of people, including the President's.

Reflecting on that conversation, the story about a Chinese village comes to mind. The streets of the village were very narrow and crowded. One day, a horse drawing a cart became unruly and stubborn. The animal kicked and charged people as they attempted to move past the location of the horse and cart. No one could get past, and the business of the town slowed. Suddenly, one young man suggested that the wise old man of the village be summoned.

Surely, if anyone would know how to get around the horse or stop the disruption, the old man would. So a contingency went to get him. They explained their need to get by the horse so the town's business could continue. As they returned to the street entrance, the old man took one look at the horse, still kicking and charging toward people. And then he promptly turned away and went down a different street.

The Moral of the story is that using the old ways of getting to where one wants to go is not always the best way. On that premise, JCC is following a new path, and creating a new Jackson Community College for the next generation.